



## Legislative Testimony

February 26, 2021

Middletown, CT 06459

@WesDems

**Eli Roche, Co-Chair**  
**Written Testimony Regarding SB-888,**  
**An Act Responsibly and Equitably Regulating Adult-Use Cannabis**

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Eli Roche, and I am a student at Wesleyan University. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Wesleyan Democrats in support of [Senate Bill 888](#).

Wesleyan Democrats (WesDems) believe that [equitable](#) legalization and regulation of marijuana will lead to safer and healthier communities in Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> The War on Drugs has been an unequivocal failure,<sup>2</sup> senselessly hurting our economy<sup>3</sup> and disproportionately harming people of color as well as low-income individuals.<sup>4</sup>

**However, we urge the committee to amend SB-888 to prevent CT colleges and universities from prohibiting legal possession and consumption of marijuana.** Anti-drug policy hurts POC and low-income people; with the current bill language, colleges will be indefinitely empowered to enforce anti-drug policies and rules. College students deserve the peace of mind that they cannot be policed or otherwise harassed by the institution they attend for lawful recreational drug use.

There is [a concern](#),<sup>5</sup> however, that if institutions of higher education (IHEs) permitted drug use that their access to federal funding would be at risk.<sup>6</sup> We offer a compromise: if the pertinent federal marijuana prohibition laws are annulled then IHEs should automatically be barred, under state law, from maintaining anti-marijuana rules. WesDems believe this solution is inclusive to the interests of IHEs and college students while also ensuring equitable marijuana legalization policy.

WesDems would ask that the language of Section 73 be amended such that SB-888 incorporates our requests. See page 2. Thank you for your consideration.

Sec. 73. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, [2022] 2021*)

(a) No hotel, motel or similar lodging shall prohibit the legal possession or consumption of cannabis, as defined in section 1 of this act, in any nonpublic area of such institution, hotel, motel or similar lodging.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, a hotel, motel and similar lodging shall prohibit the smoking of cannabis and the use of an electronic cannabis delivery system, as defined in section 19a-342a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and vapor product, as defined in said section, containing cannabis in any location of such institution or hotel, motel or similar lodging.

(c) No institution of higher education shall prohibit the legal possession or consumption of cannabis in any nonpublic area of such institution.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (c) of this section, an institution of higher education may prohibit the smoking of cannabis and the use of an electronic cannabis delivery system and vapor product containing cannabis in any location of such institution.

(e) No institution of higher education may rely on a violation of federal law related to cannabis as the sole basis for taking an adverse action against a person.

In addition to the language offered above, WesDems would ask that a subsection (f) be incorporated. Subsection (f) would exclude the application of subsections (c) to (e), inclusive, to IHEs which seek compliance with federal marijuana regulations in order to be a viable recipient of federal grant(s) related to academic affairs.

*(Otherwise put, we are asking for state law to automatically safeguard college students from potential anti-marijuana rules – in the same way that hotel patrons would be, as SB-888 is proposing – if CT legalizes marijuana and the federal government abandons regulations discouraging marijuana on college campuses.)*

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<sup>1</sup> HB-6377, “An Act Concerning Labor Peace Agreements and a Modern and Equitable Cannabis Workforce,” 2021 Regular Session (Conn. 2021), [Link to CGA Bill Web Page](#).

<sup>2</sup> Mona Chalabi, “The ‘war on drugs’ in numbers: a systematic failure of policy,” *The Guardian*, April 19, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/19/war-on-drugs-statistics-systematic-policy-failure-united-nations>; Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell, *Why the War on Drugs Is a Huge Failure*, March 1, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJUXLqNHCal>.

<sup>3</sup> Gareth Iacobucci, “‘War on Drugs’ Has Harmed Public Health and Human Rights, Finds New Analysis,” *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 352 (2016), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26942145>; Joanne Csete, “The Economics of the Drug War: Unaccounted Costs, Lost Lives, Missed Opportunities,” March 2016, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/economics-drug-war-unaccounted-costs-lost-lives-missed-opportunities>.

<sup>4</sup> German Lopez, “These Maps Show the War on Drugs Is Mostly Fought in Poor Neighborhoods,” *Vox*, April 16, 2015, <https://www.vox.com/2015/4/16/8431283/drug-war-poverty>; Ezekiel Edwards, Will Bunting, and Lynda Garcia, “The War on Marijuana in Black and White,” *American Civil Liberties Union*, June 2013, [https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field\\_document/1114413-mj-report-rfs-rel1.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/1114413-mj-report-rfs-rel1.pdf); Michael Rosino and Matthew Hughey, “The War on Drugs, Racial Meanings, and Structural Racism: A Holistic and Reproductive Approach,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 77 (October 29, 2018): 849–92, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12228>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2020/JUDdata/Tmy/2020SB-00016-R000302-Widness,%20Jennifer,%20President-CT%20Conference%20of%20Independent%20Colleges-TMY.PDF>.

<sup>6</sup> Bradley D. Custer and Robert T. Kent, “Understanding the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, Then and Now,” *The Journal of College and University Law*, 2019, <https://jcul.law.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/understanding-drug-free-schools-community-act-then-now.pdf>.